

Transactions

JANUARY/FEBRUARY
2005

TRANSPORTATION NEWS
FOR THE NINE-COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



Now Available Online

The freeway congestion statistics featured in this issue are part of the *Bay Area Transportation: State of the System 2004* project. The project also has produced updated information on local roadway, transit and bicycle travel, as well as air travel and goods movement. Details on these and other categories are available online at <www.mtc.ca.gov>.

Update

Traveler Info Service
Logs 5 Millionth Call



Rachel Garcia

Just days after celebrating its second anniversary, the Bay Area's 511 traveler information system reached another milestone in December when Rachel Garcia called to find out about traffic conditions on East Bay freeways — and became the symbolic 5 millionth caller to take advantage of the free service.

"Before I go on a trip, I always call 511 to figure out the best route to take," said the 24-year-old freelance Web designer, who frequently travels from her Concord home to attend a technical school in Castro Valley. "Whenever I find myself stuck in traffic, I call 511, ask for 'traffic conditions' to find out what the problem is, and then decide whether to try an alternate route. I call at least three or four times every week."

Garcia especially appreciates 511's state-of-the-art, voice-activated system for delivering travel information. "I love the 511 man's voice," she said, referring to voice actor Bob Hesse, whose recorded prompts guide callers through 511's menu of services. "He's so pleasant that I've been telling my friends about him."

— John Goodwin



RON CHAN

Bay Area Freeways Record Third Straight Year of Reduced Congestion
NEW STATE OF THE SYSTEM DATA ALSO REVEAL SHAKE-UP IN TOP 10 TRAFFIC HOT SPOTS

Traffic on Bay Area freeways flowed more freely in 2003 than in any year since 1998, according to the latest congestion-monitoring data jointly prepared by Caltrans and MTC. Underscoring both the impact of freeway improvement projects and the lingering sluggishness of the Bay Area economy at that time, the daily number of vehicle hours of delay due to congestion in the nine-county region dropped by 18 percent in 2003, after a 5 percent dip in 2002 and a 12 percent decline in 2001.

The overall decline in congestion also was marked by a shake-up in the annual list of the Bay Area's top 10 traffic hot spots (see "Facts & Figures" on back page). While the morning slog to the Bay Bridge on Interstate 80 remained the region's most notorious congestion location in 2003, three afternoon commutes moved into the top 10 for the first time. These include southbound U.S. 101 from University Avenue in East Palo Alto to Shoreline Boulevard in Mountain View (number 7); eastbound State Route 24 from Interstate 580 to the Caldecott Tunnel in Oakland (number 8); and eastbound Interstate 580 east of Livermore Avenue to east of Greenville Road (number 10). Three of the Bay Area's 10 worst congestion locations are now along Interstate 580 in eastern Alameda County.

All three locations that fell off the top 10 list in 2003 were morning commutes into the Silicon

Valley. These include southbound Interstate 680 over the Sunol Grade (which ranked number 8 in 2002 and among the top three from 1998 to 2001); westbound State Route 84 from Newark Boulevard to the Dumbarton Bridge toll plaza (previously number 10); and southbound Interstate 880 from Thornton Avenue to Dixon Landing Road (previously number 2). Delays in these sections likely were reduced not only by the economic chill in the South Bay, but also by several new freeway projects that came on line in late 2002 or in 2003.

Among these improvements are the high-occupancy-vehicle lane along southbound Interstate 680; the widening of the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge, which attracted westbound motorists who previously crossed the Dumbarton Bridge; and the reconstruction of the Interstate 880/Dixon Landing Road interchange

near the Alameda/Santa Clara County line.

On average, the congestion data show that vehicles collectively spent 121,800 hours per weekday in congested conditions (defined as average speeds below 35 miles per hour for 15 minutes or longer) on Bay Area freeways in 2003. This is far below the 177,600 hours per day recorded in 2000 at the height of the region's technology-charged economic boom.

"These figures present a snapshot of where we were in 2003, not necessarily where we are today," cautioned MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger. Noting that recent growth in the Bay Area economy has been accompanied by anecdotal reports of increased traffic, Heminger surmised that, "When we compile the data for 2004, we may see that 2003 marked a low point for both the economy and for time spent stuck in traffic."

— John Goodwin

Facts & Figures Daily Freeway Delay by Bay Area County, 1999–2003								
Freeway Miles	Daily (Weekday) Vehicle Hours of Delay						Percent Change	
	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2002–2003	1999–2003
Alameda	138	44,300	61,700	65,600	61,300	46,300	–24%	+5%
Contra Costa	87	14,500	16,200	18,800	19,400	18,700	–4%	+29%
Marin	28	7,700	9,900	7,900	8,400	6,200	–26%	–19%
Napa	5	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
San Francisco	19	9,100	12,500	8,500	11,400	11,200	–2%	+23%
San Mateo	73	11,500	18,100	10,900	7,700	7,300	–5%	–37%
Santa Clara	137	36,900	51,700	37,000	31,600	24,300	–23%	–34%
Solano	79	700	3,200	2,400	3,700	2,600	–30%	+271%
Sonoma	55	3,600	4,300	4,400	4,400	5,200	+18%	+44%
Bay Area Totals	621	128,300	177,600	155,500	147,900	121,800	–18%	–5%
Reflecting the region's economic upheaval of the past several years, the statistics show a steady shift in the concentration of traffic congestion since 1999, with the South Bay and Peninsula accounting for an increasingly smaller share of the area's gridlock. Source: Caltrans District 4								

Calendar

Unless indicated otherwise, all meetings take place at: Metropolitan Transportation Commission Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium 101 Eighth Street, Oakland (Across from the Lake Merritt BART station)

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 16, 2005

10 am
Partnership Board
Bay Meadows Racetrack
Longchamps Conference Room
2600 South Delaware Street, San Mateo

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 17, 2005

9:30 am
Regional Pedestrian Committee
MetroCenter, Room 171
1 pm
Bicycle Working Group
MetroCenter, Room 171

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 18, 2005

10 am
Association of Bay Area Governments/
Bay Area Air Quality Management District/
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Joint Policy Committee*

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 23, 2005

10 am
Service Authority for Freeways
and Expressways*
10:05 am
Bay Area Toll Authority*
10:10 am
Metropolitan Transportation Commission*

MONDAY
FEBRUARY 28, 2005

1:30 pm
Partnership Technical Advisory Committee
2 pm
TransLink® Management Group
AC Transit, Room to Be Determined
1600 Franklin Street, Oakland

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 2, 2005

9:30 am
Administration Committee*
10 am
Bay Area Toll Authority
Oversight Committee*
10:15 am
Programming and Allocations Committee*
Public Hearing:
Amendments to 2005 Transportation
Improvement Program
(Program of Projects)

THURSDAY
MARCH 3, 2005

10 am
Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee

FRIDAY
MARCH 4, 2005

9:30 am
Planning and Operations Committee*
Location to Be Determined
10 am
Service Authority for Freeways and
Expressways Operations Committee*
Location to Be Determined
10:15 am
Legislation Committee*
Location to Be Determined

TUESDAY
MARCH 8, 2005

3:30 pm
Minority Citizens Advisory Committee

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 9, 2005

12:30 pm
MTC Advisory Council

* Webcast on <www.mtc.ca.gov>.

Note: Dates, times and locations of MTC meetings may change. Please confirm by calling 510.464.7787. Agendas, updated meeting schedules and packets for MTC standing committees are posted on MTC's Web site: <www.mtc.ca.gov>.

In the News

Former Executive Director
Lawrence D. Dahms Honored



Former MTC Executive Director Lawrence D. Dahms has been named the 2005 recipient of the Frank Turner Medal for Lifetime Achievement in Transportation. Presented at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 84th Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., the award is jointly sponsored by more than a dozen national transportation organizations.

TRB called Dahms “a gifted transportation manager who elevated the role and influence of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO).”

“Throughout his California-based career in transportation, Dahms maintained an outlook that was national and multimodal, and colleagues from many disciplines and transport modes sought him out to play key roles in professional organizations and initiatives. A frequent participant in national policy debates, he left his imprint on the series of reauthorizations of federal surface transportation programs in the 1980s and 1990s, perhaps most notably in the expanded role given to MPOs in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991,” TRB noted in its press release.

The Frank Turner Medal recognizes lifetime achievement in transportation, as demonstrated by a distinguished career in the field, professional prominence, and a distinctive, widely recognized contribution to transportation policy, administration or research.

Active in TRB for more than 30 years, Dahms retired from MTC in 2000 after 23 years as executive director.

— Brenda Kahn

Facts & Figures Top 10 Bay Area Congestion Hot Spots: Morning Bay Bridge Approach Still the Worst of the Worst



2003 Rank	Location (numbers correspond to map)	2003 Daily (Weekday) Vehicle Hours of Delay	2002 Rank
1	Interstate 80, westbound, a.m. — Alameda/Contra Costa County State Route 4 to Bay Bridge metering lights	6,570	1
2	Interstate 80, eastbound and U.S. 101, northbound, p.m. — San Francisco Cesar Chavez Street to west end of Bay Bridge	4,520	4
3a	Interstate 580, eastbound, p.m. — Alameda County Hopyard Road to west of El Charro Road	4,320	3
3b	Interstate 580, westbound, a.m. — Alameda County North Flynn Road to Airway Boulevard	4,320	5
5	Route 4, westbound, a.m. — Contra Costa County Hillcrest Avenue to Loveridge Road	3,670	7
6	U.S. 101, southbound, a.m. — Marin County South of Rowland Boulevard to Interstate 580	2,980	9
7	U.S. 101, southbound, p.m. — San Mateo/Santa Clara County University Avenue to Shoreline Boulevard	2,490	28
8	Route 24, eastbound, p.m. — Alameda County Interstate 580 to Caldecott Tunnel	2,470	37
9	Interstate 880, northbound, p.m. — Santa Clara County Montague Expressway to north of Dixon Landing Road	2,450	6
10	Interstate 580, eastbound, p.m. — Alameda County East of Livermore Avenue to east of Greenville Road	2,370	105

Notes: Rankings are for routes in which continuous stop-and-go conditions occur with few, if any, breaks in the queue. Thus, corridors that have equally severe delays, but where congestion is broken into several segments, may rank lower in this type of congestion listing. Congestion is defined as average speeds below 35 miles per hour for 15 minutes or more. **Source:** Caltrans District 4

In Memoriam

William R. “Bill” Lucius,
Original MTC Commissioner

MTC Commissioner Emeritus William R. “Bill” Lucius, a decorated veteran of World War II, died after a battle with cancer on December 8, 2004, at age 90.

Following careers in the Marines (where he served 24 years) and the food industry, Lucius devoted his energies to civic service, with a strong commitment to the development of the San Francisco Bay Area’s transportation network. With 20 years of service on MTC, Lucius was the longest-serving commissioner in the agency’s history, starting with the Commission’s founding in 1971 and continuing until his retirement from MTC in 1991.

From 1980 to 1983, Lucius served as MTC’s chair, and for much of his MTC tenure chaired the Legislation and Public Affairs Committee. Upon his retirement from the Commission, the agency named its primary conference room in his honor.



Bill Lucius

Lucius served on the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District Board of Directors from 1969 to 1978 as a Sonoma County representative. Lucius also was active on a number of state and national bodies, and in 1994, the American Public Transportation Association inducted him into its prestigious Transit Hall of Fame.

The state Legislature also recognized Lucius’ many contributions to transportation, in 1990 designating a 22.3-mile stretch of Highway 101 from south of Healdsburg to the Sonoma-Mendocino county line as the “Colonel William R. ‘Bill’ Lucius Highway.”

A resident of Healdsburg, Lucius was a wine connoisseur and a self-appointed ambassador for Sonoma County’s wine industry. “He had this gregarious nature,” said former MTC Executive Director Lawrence D. Dahms. “Bill Lucius and a bottle

of wine got into nearly every door that needed to be opened.”

Dahms also reminisced about Lucius’ Old World good manners. “Bill was forever writing people notes. He believed in connecting and believed in remembering, and it was effective,” he said.

At the local level, Lucius served on the Healdsburg City Council and served four terms as mayor of Healdsburg, earning the designation of “Mayor Emeritus.”

Lucius served in the United States Marine Corps from 1932 to 1956, attaining the rank of colonel. He survived the attack on Pearl Harbor and served as a gunnery sergeant during the Battle of Midway. Until his passing, he was reportedly the last U.S. Marine survivor of that historic battle.

Lucius is survived by his wife May, daughter Alexis Michelle Rosa, three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

— Brenda Kahn

The family suggests donations to:
Kaiser Permanente Oncology Fund
401 Bicentennial Way
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Commission Actions

November/December 2004

- Approved eight planning grants totaling \$500,000 and 11 capital grants totaling \$18.4 million through MTC’s Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) Program, which is designed to foster pedestrian-, transit- and bike-friendly communities.

MTC Resolutions 3671, 3625 (revised)

- Allocated \$29.7 in Regional Measure 2 toll funds to 10 projects, including \$16.1 million to help acquire a parcel of land (80 Natoma Street) needed to construct the new Transbay Terminal in San Francisco; \$6 million to BART for the relocation of utilities in the vicinity of the planned Warm Springs extension; and \$3 million to BART and Caltrain to develop a *Regional Rail Integration Plan*.
- MTC Resolutions 3643 (revised), 3651 (revised), 3655 (revised), 3666, 3667, 3668, 3672, 3673, 3575

- Funded a dozen projects totaling \$2.8 million as part of the Low Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT) Program, which is designed to fill transportation gaps identified through welfare-to-work efforts and MTC-sponsored community-based transportation plans.
- MTC Resolution 3518 (revised)

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